

Hearing: Senate Bill #928

Testimony

Susan Santora, Director

Learning House LLC, 264 Church Street, Guilford, CT 06437

203 453-3691

I strongly urge the passing of Senate Bill #928 because there is a strong need for improved teacher training in research-based reading instruction from our CT institutions of higher education.

Over the past 5 years at Learning House, I have provided 60 hours of instruction per year to over one hundred teachers in a reading approach* that is based on research and was developed for individuals with dyslexia and other reading/writing disabilities. 60% of the course participants have been public school teachers. Although the approach is designed for individuals with disabilities, the curriculum is consistent with scientific researched-based instruction that is mandated by Connecticut's SRBI plan. Typical teacher comments during the course include: Why didn't I learn this when I was in college? This information is so useful. The information is missing from my district's SRBI plan but it shouldn't be. I can definitely apply this information for my students right away. As much as I like teaching reading instruction to teachers, I fully support effective research-based reading instruction from our state training institutions and Connecticut public schools.

Due to the lack of public school teacher training in the area of literacy, requests for Learning House educators to consult to 18 school districts this year alone regarding students who are not making gains in reading and writing is further evidence that the schools need help to implement effective reading/writing instruction.

Other strong evidence that Connecticut teacher training institutions need to examine how they train teachers of reading is the sorely low number of graduating students who pass the Connecticut Reading Test. Every teacher graduating from Connecticut teacher training colleges should pass this test.

Those of us who are passionate about reading are passionate about passing this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Santora".

Susan Santora, M.S., F/AOGPE

*The Orton-Gillingham Approach